

Application of Eye Drops by Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis

ANNEGRET H. DAHLMANN, Dr Med, FRCOphth, FRCSEd, Wolverhampton Eye Infirmary, Compton Road, Wolverhampton WV3 9QR and Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre; CHRISTOPHER K.S. CHEW, FRCOphth, FRCS, Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre, City Hospital NHS Trust, Birmingham, UK. Address reprint requests to Dr. Dahlmann; E-mail: adahlmann@hotmail.com

Patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) commonly suffer from severe keratoconjunctivitis sicca and are required to instil artificial tears at short intervals. As most preparations contain preservatives, which induce corneal epithelial toxicity when applied frequently, patients with RA are often prescribed preservative-free drops. Preservative-free drops

are presented in small, rigid vials (Minims®). These vials are difficult to use with arthritic hands, and paradoxically, the very patients who need these preparations most find it difficult or impossible to use them. We have found that Minims fit neatly between the tongs of eyelash curlers, and that this instrument greatly facilitates the application of drops.



Figure 1. A patient with RA uses an eyelash curler to apply drops.